GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:302
ANSWERED ON:13.03.2006
FOREST COVER
Gandhi Smt. Maneka

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of forest cover in the country as on December 31, 2005;

(b) the rate of depletion of forest cover in India, annually; and

(c) the details of the steps taken to prevent depletion of forest cover?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRINAMONARAINMEENA)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b) AND (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 302 BY SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.3.2006 REGARDING FOREST COVER.

(a) Forest Survey of India (FSI) carries out forest cover assessment once in every two years. The last assessment of forest cover was made in 2003 and it was based on satellite data of the year 2002. The next assessment (2005) based on interpretation of satellite data of the year 2004 is currently in progress. Therefore,the information on the percentage of forest cover in the country as on December 2005 is not available at present. The forest cover of the country as per the latest assessment (2003) is 6,78,333 sq.km. constituting 20.64 % of the geographic area of the country.

(b) State of Forest Report (SFR) 2003 published by FSI shows the net increase of 2795 sq. km, over the SFR 2001 assessment.

(c) The steps taken to prevent depletion of forest cover, inter-alia,include the following:

(i) Strict enforcement of Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife(Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules and guidelines made thereunder,

(ii) Meetings of State Forest Ministers, Forest Secretaries and other Forest Officials have been held in the years 2004 and 2006 to, inter-alia, stress upon increasing the forest and tree cover and for stricter enforcement of forest laws.

(iii) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans, Forest Development Agencies and Joint Forest Management activities.

(iv) Financial measures like providing assistance to the States/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored schemes and externally aided projects.

(v) Other measures like creation of Protected Areas,Substitution of Wood etc.

(vi) Guidelines for rationalizing of felling and transit regulations for tree species grown on non-forest private lands to promote large scale afforestation in non-forest areas.